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# LETTER DATED 13 DECEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the letter of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia to the President of the Security Council on the situation in the Chechnya section of the state border between the Russian Federation and Georgia (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Peter CHKHEIDZE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

99-38840 (E) 141299

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Annex

Letter dated 13 December 1999 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to present my compliments to you and inform you that Georgia has made an official proposal to the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to expand the mandate of the OSCE mission in Georgia for monitoring the Chechnya section of the state border between Georgia and the Russian Federation.

This decision of the Government of Georgia was inspired by the tense situation in the nearby territory of the border between Georgia and the Russian Federation. In the course of military operations under way in Chechnya, the border of Georgia has been crossed several times by groups of refugees, whose number has recently exceeded four thousand. Almost all of them are women, children and elders. With a view to finding refuge and physical survival, they have made their way through high mountain paths in unbearable frost. For that reason, many of them are seriously ill and need relevant medical treatment. There are also wounded persons among them. We expect that their number will increase, due to further sequence of events.

Guided by the highest principle of humanity, the Government of Georgia, with participation of the inhabitants of bordering villages, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations, renders whatever assistance is possible to the refugees.

Despite the efforts undertaken, a considerable number of refugees and the expected tendency for their increase is cause for our deepest concern. It must be taken into account the fact that Georgia is facing serious challenges in resolving internal conflicts, in the course of which more than 300,000 Georgians were ethnically cleansed from their homeland and became internally displaced persons.

We are also concerned that a growing number of refugees from Chechnya are penetrating the territory of Abkhazia region controlled by separatists and identification of their quantity and composition still remains impossible. The Government of Georgia expressed its readiness to receive observers from the Border Service of the Russian Federation to monitor the relevant section of the border, and also to exercise joint monitoring at the border of the Abkhazia region. But these issues, as well as the results of the work of joint inquiry commission on the border incident of 17 November 1999 (see S/1999/1181) remain without response.

The Government of Georgia is deeply concerned by unfounded statements from the Russian side, disseminated by the Russian mass media, accusing Georgia of supporting arms trafficking, providing assistance to the Chechen guerrilla movement and giving shelter to Chechen combatants. These statements aim at further escalating the situation in the Caucasus and involving Georgia in the conflict. Once again, I would like to declare that Georgia, as a sovereign

State, has never allowed anybody to use its territory for military operations in connection with the ongoing conflict in the neighbouring country, and will not allow it in the future.

Considering the extremely complicated situation on the border, the Government of Georgia carried out relevant measures in order to strengthen the security system of the border. With a view to promoting common security, additional measures have been already undertaken and are still under way.

We are confident that the establishment of intense monitoring by OSCE in the border region will prevent further escalation of the existing complex situation, will not allow anybody to provoke a trend of unfavourable developments and will promote mutual confidence and cooperation.

Considering the responsibilities of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, fully understanding the importance of early consideration of the possibilities of a further complication of the situation, the Government of Georgia is obliged to inform the Security Council about this threat and ask it to fully exercise all its mechanisms in order to provide adequate and timely coordination of international efforts. We hope that the already examined cooperation between United Nations and OSCE will prove to be successful.

(Signed) Irakli MENAGARISHVILI

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